

Laura Mae Jackson  
394 Lost Horse Road  
Hamilton, MT 59840

**RECEIVED**

**JUN 22 2007**

**Ravalli County Commissioners**

Chuck Oliver, District Ranger  
Darby Ranger District  
P. O. Box 388  
Darby, MT 59828

Subject: Reopening Lost Horse Road Rock Quarry

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I AM WRITING TO OPPOSE REOPENING OF THIS ROCK/GRAVEL  
OPERATION.

In the more than thirty years that I have lived on Lost Horse, it has changed from a sparsely populated agricultural area on a lightly used, except during the Idaho hunting season, backcountry access road. This was the situation when this quarry was last officially open. Lost Horse is now a rural neighborhood, with probably six or seven times as many homes, and it has been transformed, by considerable Forrest Service investment and permitting, into a major recreation access corridor.

The traffic of trucks transporting rock would constitute a major safety problem on a road that carries a lot of neighborhood traffic— foot and bicycle as well as vehicle --which is already impacted by considerable horse trailer, boat, snowmobile, dirt-bike and ATV trailer hauling traffic as well as campers and sightseers and hunters and prospective hunters. The road also gets significant traffic as an alternative scenic route to our valley "town beach" at Como and by visitors to the Lick Creek forest practices demonstration area, and by those going to the Lost Horse saloon/resort. The neighborhood already suffers considerable negative impact from traffic noise which will surely increase if this quarry is permitted and the additional traffic will make the road significantly more dangerous for both resident and recreational users.

Even more important than these neighborhood concerns are the special qualities of Lost Horse Canyon that make it a valued resource for all residents of the Bitterroot Valley and the tourist visitors essential to our economy. Ten years of rock mining with adjacent gravel crushing development would irreparably alter and harm this resource. Lost Horse is a unique wilderness access road. In addition to providing wilderness destination access, it has long been noted for providing a wilderness-like experience for those who cannot cope with



the physical challenges of wilderness adventuring on foot or without motorized equipment. The noise and dust of rockwork is not the proper wilderness portal experience for the USFS to promote. It is in no way conducive to respect for the values we expect wilderness visitors to enjoy and honor. Who is going to observe the no firewood-cutting ban around the corner from a quarry?

Increased law enforcement costs and FS road maintenance costs are likely to result if this proposal is permitted. In addition, the loss of the recreational values and negative impacts on wildlife, in both of which the USFS has invested over the past several decades, seem likely to far outweigh any short term income from the county for the use of this quarry. This project does not appear to make fiscal sense in terms of your spending of our tax dollars. Please respond to this letter with any cost-benefit analysis data that you have considered.

This project would have major negative impacts on a residential neighborhood and a recreational destination used by residents valley wide and visiting tourists. It is hard to imagine a proper analysis would justify reopening this quarry, but, at the least, such analysis with full public participation should be conducted before a permit is even considered.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Laura Mae Jackson

Cc: Glenda Wiles for Ravalli County Commissioners